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SUBJECT: TRINIDAD'S INL CANINE ACADEMY PROGRAM: AN ONGOING SUCCESS

¶1. SUMMARY: On August 3, the Trinidad and Tobago Canine Academy held their most recent graduation for 9 new officers and canines. In addition, the national newspapers showcased the academy on June 14 and 15. This new unit of the T&T Police Service was established with the assistance of Post's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) program in 2005. The Canine Academy, the first true joint venture between the host government and the INL program, and has been a source of ongoing success stories. END SUMMARY

¶2. The K9 Academy is composed of 18 canines and their respective handlers: 9 explosive detection canines (or bomb dogs), 6 tactical/narcotics dogs, 2 straight narcotics and 1 cadaver-finding dog. The bomb dogs, who work with the Explosive Detection and Disposal Unit, have responded to numerous threats in all parts of the country. Their debut in service came with a series of small and still unsolved explosions in Port of Spain in mid-late 2005. The dogs were also put into regional service when the Indian Black Cat Commandos requested a dog and handler to search for bombs at Providence Stadium in Guyana during the Cricket World Cup in Spring 2007.

¶3. The seven canines that make up the Tactical Narcotics team have been instrumental in the discovery of over 350kg of marijuana, 1 kg of heroin and 9 kg of cocaine between May 2006 and May 2007, valued at approximately USD 670,000, as well as finding arms and ammunition. The cadaver dog has found one body so far and works with the Homicide branch of the Police Division.

¶4. The K9 Academy continues to grow. The renovated kennels can now house 36 canines. In an effort to integrate female officers, the necessary accommodations are being constructed at the academy. Recertification is required every year and as a result, one of the initial K9 officers has reached the level of assistant instructor. Due to the popularity and prestige of the unit, a competitive candidate waiting list now exists.

¶5. Post's INL program contracted with CSI International to conduct the initial training and certification. Since then, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has retained CSI for a two year period to oversee the continuous training and re-certification of the dogs. President and CEO of CSI, Anthony Piegaré continues to receive high praise from handlers and the Police Service as a whole, for his level of expertise, commitment to excellence and to the program. Post appreciates his willingness to work as a partner to the program, ensuring its success.

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